how to avoid making mistakes." It would appear that the Communists were so eager to prove the righteousness of their actions that they arranged "history" in the way they wished it to seem. 814 538

Judging from the extent to which the land reform turned the rural social and political order upside-down, the Three-Anti and Five-Anti campaigns destroyed the bourgeois stronghold in the national economy, and the way in which the war in Korea affected the national life, one might expect that those writers who had been given the opportunity to witness these momentous events would accomplish literary feats of equal magnitude. On the contrary, one finds, with only rare exceptions, "formula" stories which have all of the correct political ingredients demanded of them but which lack originality and any attempt at characterization. One story of land reform reads much like another, the only differences being the names given the heroes and some few idiosyncracies of the writers in the use of colloquial expressions and political jargon. The necessary adherence to the prescribed political formula has blighted creativeness.

C. Literary Criticism

What has contributed most to this fear of originality in literature is the influence of officially organized and directed literary criticism, which uses Communist literary theories to coerce and browbeat the writers. The disparity in the respect given critical and creative forces has stunted the young Communist literature and precluded a normal growth.

Outstanding instances of the enervating effect of criticism are the reviews of the play, "The Song of 814 538 536

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of the Red Flags," and the story, "Old Worker Ku Fu-shan." The play, concerning shock-teams in a productive drive, was initially praised by the Communists themselves; later, it was criticized because "it did not give a strong portrayal of the trade union and the Party." According to the critics, the author should have used the play to strengthen the prestige of the trade union among the worker-audiences as well as to emphasize the "heroic" qualities of the leading protagonist, a Communist cadre. The portrayal of the Party cadre P'eng Kang in the story was deemed incorrect, "for the Party's leadership is invariably collective, but in the play P'eng seems to be quite alone." The play was thus rated "of low educational value." The author of the story "Old Worker Ku Fu-shan" was reprimanded because he "not only distorts the image of a model Party member but also completely ignores the function of Party training and leadership."

The classic example of Communist literary and artistic criticism involves the 1951 Shanghai-produced film, Wu Hsün Chuan," based on the life of a famous advocate of free education who lived in Shantung Province. Wu Hsün was born into a poor family and was thus deprived of formal education. In order to help children to attend school, he dedicated himself to hard work and frugal living; and by shrewd investment of his savings, he succeeded in accumulating funds for the education of the poor. Wu Hsün's contribution to Chinese education was never questioned until the Communist critics attacked the film. Wu's effort for the kind of education prevalent at his time, according to the Communist critics, only strengthened the feudal order and arrested the forces of progress; rather

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each line containing seven syllables which are, in fact, seven characters in written form. Kwangtung Province has more folk songs and popular rhymes than do other provinces in the region. Folk songs in Kwangtung can be divided into three groups according to the dialects in which they are sung: Cantonese, Fukienese, and Hakka. 538 533

The Chinese Communists have always been active in fostering folk songs and popular rhymes which welcome or accept the new political order. The best example is "Tung-fang Hung" ("All Red the East"), a folk song originating in Shensi and now well-known in Central-South China, which likens Mao Tse-tung to the sun rising in the east. Some of the newer folk songs fostered by the Communists praise construction and eulogize the "new people" under the present regime.

Some of the older folk songs are now being rearranged so that the old forms accomodate the new ideology. The most notable example is Yüan Chang-ching's re-arrangement of the song "The Water of the Chang River." In Central-South China nothing of comparable quality is known to have been composed.

G. Drama

Stage plays in China can be roughly divided into four kinds: (1) folk plays native to small dialectal districts; (2) ching-hsi or p'i-huang (Peking opera) which is appreciated in all parts of China proper, but particularly in North China and in the big cities of other regions; (3) the new opera, a genre created by the Chinese Communists; and (4) the modern play. 536

These, together with motion pictures, are now utilized by the Communists to disseminate ideological and political messages. [536]

1. The folk plays Parallel to the many dialectal differences in the Central-South Region, the folk plays are both numerous and various. The following are the most representative.

"Honan pang-tzu" is one of the many variations of the North China pang-tzu. The musical rhythms of these plays are marked by the beat of a foot-long wooden stick, which is North China is called pang-tzu, an indication that traditionally Honan is more closely related to North China than to the southern provinces. [534]

"Yüeh-chü" (Kwangtung hsi, not Ch'ao-chou hsi). The musical arrangement of Yüeh-chü indicates that in its development it has appropriated musical elements of folk plays from East and Central China. Compared with Ch'ao-chou hsi, Yüeh-chü is decidedly richer in content and more integrated in form, having a larger professional group and a leisure class dedicated to its appreciation. The difference reflects the different economic situations of the two groups of people supporting these two types of folk plays. The Cantonese-speaking Kwang-fu people, who are Yüeh-chü-goers, tend to occupy the richer land as descendants of the first Han Chinese to settle in Kwangtung. The Fukienese-speaking Ch'ao-chou people, who are Ch'ao-chou hsi supporters, came to Kwangtung later, and have settled on less fertile lands. The K'e-chia people (Hakka), who are the last group of Han Chinese immigrants into Kwangtung, and who subsist on barren lands, do not have their own forms of folk play. Instead, the K'e-chia people have a

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richer collection of popular rhymes and folk songs. 536

Other folk plays in the Central-South Region include hsi (Tsui-tzu), Ch'u-chü, Han-chü, and Hsiang-chü. Much of the sung music of these folk plays, as well as that of pang-tzu, has been incorinto ching-hsi; and because ching-hsi is popular in all parts of China, few Chinese find the music outlandish in folk plays of Honan, Hupeh, and Honan.

2. Ching-hsi A composite of many regional plays, Ching-hsi is popular in all parts of China. The best actors and actresses of ching-hsi, however, have been those associated with the Peking theatres. The musical accompaniment is carried by the hu-ch'in, [534] a stringed instrument, assisted by other strings and by wood-winds. Percussion is used to accentuate rhythms of body movements and to dramatize heightened moments.

At its present state, ching-hsi is a highly polished form of art. It no longer depends for audience appeal on plotting but rather on a display of skill by the actors. It emphasizes costuming rather than scenery. The verses sung serve to express the feelings of the chief characters. Actors may play the female roles and adresses may play the male roles. The music pattern is not very flexible, but permits the well-known actors or actresses to vary the style at will. The spoken dialogue and the spoken patter, consisting of clichés in colloquial language, help the movement of the play, make the literary language of the sung verses more intelligible to the audience, and aid in the variation of the rhythm. However, most of the spectators know the plays, have memorized verses, and can sing some of them. They come to the theatre to watch and enjoy the art of a stylized

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performance.

In comparison with the folk plays, the ching-hsi is a much more integrated art. Therefore, it is more difficult to bring innovations to the ching-hsi without damaging its accepted form; in contrast, the folk plays may easily incorporate new elements. This fact accounts for the Communists' effort to revamp the folk plays and to bring them up to the same level of popular and artistic recognition as the ching-hsi. However, in the Communists' effort to reinterpret history, the ching-hsi is at present rendering unique service. The Communists have not only revised many of the old scripts to conform to their ideology, but have also encouraged new scripts to be written. In this attempt, well-known actors like Mei Lan-fang and Ch'eng Yen-ch'iu are asked to lend a helping hand.

Playwrights in Communist China are now told to study ching-hsi, because this form can be used to dramatize personalities. In the Communists' effort to glorify the image of the "new heroes," this art is considered extremely important.

3. The new opera The new opera in China is modeled after the operatic forms of the West but the content conveys revolutionary themes. The first experiment in this form was The White-haired Girl (1944), a collective creation of the writers and artists of the Lu Hsün Institute of Literature and Art. In the arias sung by the heroine, the musical pattern of the Hopei pang-tzu is borrowed to convey her changing moods. This is considered a very successful adaptation by the Communists. But the melodies of the

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other sung parts, which appear to be of yang-ko origin, are close to folk songs and lack dramatic effect. The White-haired Girl has been characterized as "drama-plus-song," a term which indicates that the operatic form is not well enough developed to enable the music to carry the theme.

This inadequacy was remedied in the second major opera commissioned by the Communists. The opera Liu Hu-lan gives the heroine Liu Hu-lan opportunities to "delineate her heroic personality" in longer and more frequent arias. The musical pattern of the Shansi pang-tzu is used in the arias, and the whole opera has a Shansi color.

The composers were alarmed when they discovered that the melodies which describe the corrupt life of the landlord in the opera The White-haired Girl were hummed by the audience rather than the arias of the heroine and the chorus of the 8th Route Army. They resolved not to give the "negative" personality strong musicalization. As a result, the opera Liu Hu-lan incorporates queer and disjointed melodies for the villainous roles, and the villains are shallow caricatures. Thus, for ideological reasons, the Communists now limit "true music" to the expression of "lofty passions" for the "right cause."

The new operas are intended for national consumption irrespective of regional differences, although local airs are incorporated into the scores according to the locality of the stories. Both The White-haired Girl and Liu Hu-lan are based on incidents which occurred in North China, although they have been transformed grossly by "dramatic" exaggerations. They are performed by opera troupes all over China, and their influence is therefore national. Other well-known operas include the Long March, in which

Mao Tse-tung is impersonated for the first time. 536

4. Modern play (hua-chü) The modern play, like the motion picture, has no regional character. 536 545
Any acceptable play will be staged in all parts of China, and kuo-yü (the National Language) is used rather than the various dialects. Ch'en Ch'i-t'ung's Thousands of Rivers and Mountains proves that the Communists' Long March in the thirties is always "correct" material for dramatization. The Song of the Red Flags, concerned with production drives in a textile factory in North China, was a collective creation of three playwrights, written after they had agreed on the ideological significance of this type of play and had sketched out the plot under the "guidance" of Chou Yang, the Vice-minister of Cultural Affairs. The Song of the Red Flags was performed in Peking, Shanghai, Nanking, Chungking, Lan-chou and other big cities. In Shanghai alone, it had 159 performances, and some 125,000 people attended it.[20] If we take into account the fact that theater-going is now an organized social activity of the various mass organizations such as labor unions, the Women's Federation, the New Democratic Youth Corps, the Young Pioneers, and the study circles, the length of the run and the size of the audience do not accurately reflect the enthusiasm of the people but rather the effectiveness of the Communist organization for mass participation in the field of recreation.

5. Motion pictures Shanghai and Mukden are now the centers of China's motion picture industry. The White-haired Girl, based on the same version as the opera, won the first prize among the thirty-eight entries at the Communist International Motion-Picture 546

20. Jen-min Hua-pao [People's Pictorial], Peking, July 1950.

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made of the radio-diffusion exchange. Radio diffusion is a device for disseminating broadcasts by means of a network of speakers attached to a single reception set. Each net is called a radio-diffusion exchange. The use of radio-diffusion exchanges has proved of special value in Kwangtung Province. As of June 1955, there were 213 such exchanges, 70 operating in towns and cities and 143 in factories, mines, and business offices.[13] There are at least two major advantages gained by the use of such a device. First, it enables the Communists to use a minimum number of receition sets to reach a maximum number of radio listeners. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the wired network of the radio-diffusion exchange has a greater adaptability to propaganda control. Since the radio-diffusion exchange selects the programs to be relayed by scattered speakers, it is easy to rule out any possibility of intrusion of enemy radio propaganda. In view of the proximity of Kwangtung Province to Hong Kong and the free world, the use of the radio-diffusion exchange by the Communists in that province is quite understandable.

The Stage as a Propaganda Medium The Communists recognize the traditional Chinese drama as "an effective instrument for educating the masses with revolutionary spirit and patriotism."[14] Committees have been formed and charged with the

13. Hua-ch'iao Jih-pao [China Daily News], New York, June 2, 1955.

14. People's Daily, December 17, 1950.

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task of reforming the local theaters by replacing their "feudalistic, superstitious, and anti-labor" themes with those which might help "publicize and eulogize the people's dictatorship, the Communist Party, and the people's government; awaken the political conscience of the people; stimulate the zeal for production on the part of the people; and praise the new personalities and events of society."[15] In 1950, for example, in the city of Wuhan alone, 31 traditional opera scripts were revised, and 75 traditional dramas were staged according to new scripts. It was also reported that some 700,000 people in Wuhan attended performances.[16] During the same year, committees in Hupei Province revised more than 90 scripts of local operas and presented 152 performances based on new scripts.[17]

15. Ch'en Huang-mei, "Chia-ch'iang T'uan-chieh Kai-chin Hsi-ch'ü Kai-ko Kung-tso", ["Strenghtening the Unity of the Acting Profession and Improving our Drama Reform Work"], Ch'ang-chiang Jih-pao [Yangtze Daily], Hankow, October 16, 1952.

16. Teng's report cited above.

17. Li Hsien-nien, "Hupeh Sheng Jen-min Cheng-fu I-nien-lai Shih-cheng Kung-tso Yü Chin-hou Jen-wu,"] "On the Work of the Current and the Future Tasks of the People's Provincial Government of Hupeh,"] Cheng-fu Kung-tso Pao-kao Hui-pien [A Compendium of Government Reports (1950)], Peking, 1951, p. 871.

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The use of the local stage as a medium of propaganda again indicates the strategy of the Communists, who know that since the Chinese people are fond of their traditional plays, the use of such material in propaganda work will prove effective. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the stage as an instrument for propaganda lies in the fact that plays appeal to both literate and illiterate people. Since about 80 per cent of the Chinese people are illiterate, the medium of drama is ideal for the dissemination of propaganda, especially since there are many local dramatic troupes available. Like every other group in Communist China engaged in propaganda work, dramatic troupes are constantly watched and rigidly controlled by the propaganda authorities in the region.

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Books, Pamphlets, and Comic Strips as a Medium of Propaganda and Public Information In November 1951, immediately following the reorganization of the major publishing houses in such places as Shanghai and Peking, the Central-South Branch of the Hsin-hua Book Store (official book distributor of the Communist regime) launched a drive to collect old books for destruction. The reason cited was an effort to "clean up lingering feudalistic poison."[18] Up to July 1952, tons of old books, mainly Chinese classics, were collected from the people in Hunan and Hupeh. Some of these books were burned, others were shipped to Shanghai and other cities for conversion into paper pulp.

18. Kuang-ming Jih-pao [Enlightenment Daily], Peking, January 25, 1953.

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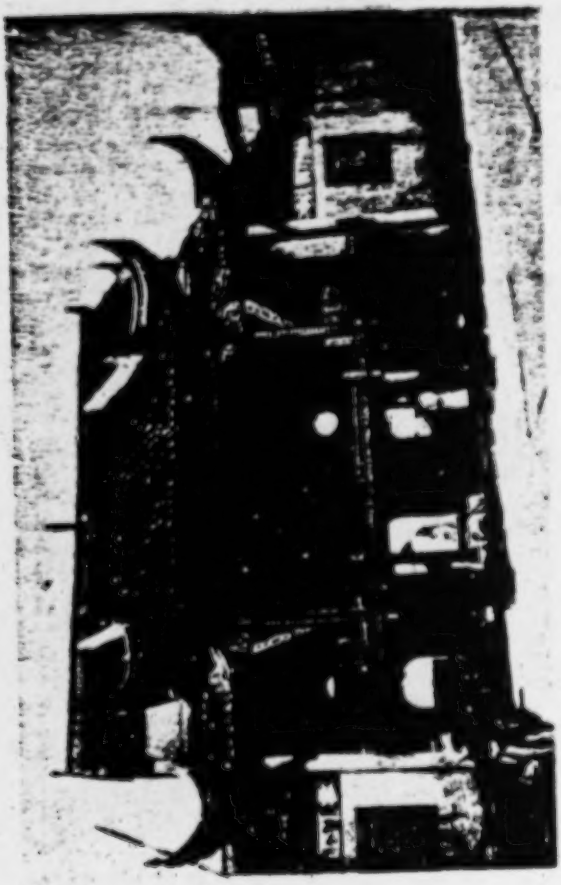

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The Stage in the Tung Yo Miao.

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